

Dear Members of the Connecticut Human Services Committee:

My name is Patricia Alvarenga, I am a member of the *Hartford Deportation Defense*. I live in Hartford with my family. I support **HB 6616: An Act Relating to the Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits for Persons Ineligible Due to Immigration Status** because health insurance is a fundamental human right.

Of our family, only my youngest son has access to health insurance because he was born here. My oldest son is 13 years old and does not have health insurance. That is very difficult for us because to be able to receive medical attention ourselves, we must have money. For the dentist, for the pediatrician, all his medicines. We only go to the doctor for the basics because we cannot be going so that later the bill arrives, and what they do to you depends on what comes out.

Two years ago, I had to undergo an emergency appendectomy. To this day, I receive bills of \$16,000. I endured the pain for 3 days because I didn't want to go to the hospital. And that's why I had to have an emergency operation. If I have any pain, I cannot go to the doctor, because how are we going to pay a tremendous amount? At this time they told me that I have kidney stones and I have not been able to see the doctor because I do not have insurance and that is the first thing they ask for. I also have spinal problems that I can't fix. I can't get pain pills or treatment to improve the problem. Sometimes because of the pain I can't walk.

Members of the committee, we ask you to support bill **HB6616** because I am concerned that my son is going to fall, or something like what happened to me happens to him and that I will not have a way to care for him due to lack of insurance. Our work does not end with extending the HUSKY to 26 years of age; we need to open access to HUSKY to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable and growing workforce, it must ensure that all undocumented people have access to health coverage.

Thanks for your time,

Patricia Alvarenga